

Trinity Episcopal Church
Gorrie Square
Apalachicola
Franklin County
Florida

HABS No. FLA-151

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. FLA-151

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Location: Florida, Franklin County, Apalachicola, Gorrie Square.

Present Owner: Diocese of Florida

Present Use: Religious Activities

Brief Statement of Significance: Consecrated on February 15, 1841, Trinity is one of the oldest churches in Florida. This structure was prefabricated in New York and brought to Apalachicola to be assembled in 1839.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. This church was built for the Diocese of Florida between 1837 and 1839. In 1856 a pipe organ was presented to the church and used until 1921. It remains stored in the balcony. During the Civil War church cushions and carpets were given to the Confederate Army for blankets and bell for canon. The slave balcony has not been used by the congregation since the Emancipation Proclamation.
2. Date of erection: 1837-1839.
3. Original plans, construction, etc.: The building was financed by the purchase of pews (The 1839 plot of the pews is in possession of the church) and by subscription. A pre-framed building, to be put together with wood pins, of white pine, was purchased in New York and shipped to Apalachicola in 1837 or 1838.
4. Notes on alterations and additions: In 1921 the chancel was recessed, stained glass windows added, the church painted, foundations repaired, a new floor laid, and pews rearranged to form a central aisle. (The original communion railing is stored in the attic). A vestibule appears to be an addition.
5. Important old views: An 1892 photograph of the interior of the chancel wall of the sanctuary prior to 1921 alterations.

6. Sources of information:

- a. W. T. Saffron, Vicar, Trinity Episcopal Church, Apalachicola
- b. G. Rodman Porter, Apalachicola State Bank
- c. History of the Trinity Episcopal Church, Apalachicola, Florida, Fred Sawyer, Sr.

B. Supplemental Material: The following is extracted from History of Trinity Episcopal Church, Apalachicola, Florida, Fred Sawyer, Sr.:

...On January 17, 1838, Mrs. George Field attended the FIRST DIOCESAN CONVENTION, which was held at Tallahassee, as a Lay Delegate, he had also been elected the first warden of Trinity Church.

The Rev. Charles Jones of New York, our first Rector, had arrived November 23, 1837 and was at the Convention with Mr. Field. Mr. Jones stayed through 1838.

While at the Convention Mr. Field was made a member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese, he made a report to the Convention as follows --

Mr. George Fields' Report

"Christ Church, Apalachicola, Florida, This Church was organized in the Fall or Winter of 1835 by the Rev. Fitch W. Taylor, from the Diocese of Maryland, who was sojourning for a few months in Florida. Mr. Taylor also about this time, organized a Parish at St. Joseph, at each place he performed the Services of the Church.

"During the session of the Legislature Council of Florida, held in January and February of 1837 both of these Churches were incorporated, the names of the incorporators were Colin Mitchell, John Gorrie, E. Wood, George S. Middlebrook, Hiram Nourse, W. G. Porter, C. E. Bartlett, Ludlum S. Chittenden and George Field. But until the last few weeks no clergyman of our Church had been settled or Missionary Labor performed in either Parish.

"In December 1836 the undersigned arrived in Apalachicola, and there being no clergyman or any Communion or scarcely any evidence of a due appreciation of the institution of the Lord's Day, he was induced to suggest to the Citizens of the place the propriety of having the Service of the Episcopal Church stately performed.

"The proposition was favorably received, and having a supply of Prayer Books, which he had brought with him for the use of the congregation, the undersigned commenced reading the Services and a sermon from some approved author morning and evening of each Sunday.

"The Services continued to be well attended, and an increasing interest for the regular administration was apparent, finally, during the spring of 1837, resulted in the unanimous request on the part of the whole congregation, convened on notice, that the Vestry, which had been reelected, proceed to obtain a clergyman of the Episcopal Church.

"In pursuance of this, the committee to whom the subject was entrusted, invited to the Rectorship the Rev. Charles Jones, from the Diocese of New York, who is now officiating as Missionary there, and has commenced his labors under very flattering prospects.

"The congregation has increased since his arrival, a larger room in which to hold services has become necessary, and one is already in a forward state of preparation.

"A general and strong disposition exists to erect a Church edifice. The Apalachicola Land Company, with commendable liberality, have conveyed to the Vestry a most eligible lot for the purpose.

"A subscription has commenced with spirit, and it is highly probable that an edifice suitable to the wants of the congregation will be erected the next season...."

(signed) George Field, Warden
and Delegate to the Convention.

Tallahassee, Florida.
January 17, 1838.

After Mr. Jones left, Mr. Field again took charge and held Services (lay) until December 9, 1840, meantime however, he had attended the second Convention on January 21, 1839, at Tallahassee, while there he had the records changed from Christ Church to Trinity....

Mr. Field was instrumental in getting further subscriptions to build a Church, a plat of the pews was drawn up and members purchased their pews as was a custom at that time, \$11,575 was raised in this way, a copy of this Chart, with the names and amount paid has been placed in the Book of Remembrance.

Mr. Field now urged the building of the Church and a building was framed, to be put together with wooden pins, of white pine, and was brought from New York by schooner to Apalachicola late in 1837 or early 1838 and erection was completed in 1839.

We owe much to Mr. George Field for his devotion to the work of the Church, and in fact, he will always stand out as the greatest layman in the history of Trinity.

In 1840 the Convention met in Trinity Church, Mr. Field made his report to the Convention regarding the completion of the Church. During this year the bell was installed, Mr. Henry L. Grady remembered it as having a very sweet tone, it was melted into cannon at the time of the Civil War.

Also this year the Rev. A. Bloomer Hart became Rector December 9, 1840 and stayed until 1845. In 1841 Mr. Hart reported 17 Communicants, thirty Sunday School pupils and seven teachers, however this number was far exceeded in the usual attendance at Church Services as members of all Churches attended and also helped to raise the money to build the Church.

On February 15, 1841 the Rt. Rev. James H. Otey, Bishop of Tennessee, visited Apalachicola, administered the rite of Confirmation and Consecrated Trinity Church. The day was cold and windy -- "nevertheless," said the Bishop, "the House was pretty nearly filled with an orderly and apparently devout congregation, before whom, with the rites and solemnities prescribed, I Consecrated Trinity Church to the worship of Almighty God according to the order of the Protestant Episcopal Church."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: A one-story Greek Revival frame structure, prefabricated of white pine, wood peg fasteners; recessed porch with two modified Ionic wood columns, wood pilasters at each corner.
2. Condition of Fabric: Excellent, with very little modification of the original.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately 41' (front) x 61', facing southeast.
2. Foundations: Brick piers.
3. Wall Construction: Wood frame covered with horizontal clapboards, $4\frac{1}{2}$ " exposure, wood pilasters at corners of building and at recessed porch. Wood water table.
4. Porches: Recessed porch at entrance, distyle in antis, with two Ionic wood fluted columns (hollow), wood capitals, concrete bases (molded), new concrete steps.
5. Chimney: Brick, with arched brick cap, above ceiling (Stove pipe below originally).
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Entrance doorway, simple wide trim, decorated panel of vertical siding above; four ~~six~~-panel doors, mortise and tenon, pegged joints. Plain doorway, four-panel door, to two stairways to slave balcony.
 - b. Windows: Three sash of 24 lights each per window. Vertical sliding lower sash. Top sash pivoted inward. Old glass.
 - c. Shutters: Three horizontal bands, four panels each, louvered wood shutters.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape and covering: Gable roof, sheet metal roofing. Round window in pediment.
 - b. Cornice and eaves: Heavy wood cornice, fascia; no eaves.
 - c. Tower: Square wood tower, stepped; triangular pointed openings each side with railing, corner pilasters, fascia and cornice, pyramid roof, asphalt shingle roofing, wood cross.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Recessed entry porch to stairs to balcony and to vestibule to sanctuary. Two rear doors at chancel.

2. Stairways: Two "U" shaped stairways to balcony, starting with winders, turned newels and balusters, one baluster per tread.
 3. Flooring: 2½" oak strips.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls of horizontal beaded siding. Vertical beaded siding wainscot and molded chair rail. Ceiling finished with beaded siding, painted. Excellent stencil in perfect condition (Floral patterns, vines, fleur-de-lis); painted medallion (shadows cast) at point of central lighting fixture.
 5. Doorways and doors: Modern doors at doorways flanking chancel and choir.
 6. Trim: Original cypress pews and wood, tapered Ionic columns supporting balcony. Balcony fascia paneled. Simple wood cornice (not original). Baseboard 13" wide.
 7. Hardware: Bolts (top and bottom), original door hardware (except hinges).
 8. Lighting: Modern electric
 9. Heating: Forced warm air
- D. Site: Faces southeast onto Gorrie Square, near Parish Hall (c. 1930) and Rectory (1900). Miscellaneous masonry walks and curbs. Large oak trees in front of structure.

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